

Podcast Transcript

Topic: Make a Public Pledge Now – Say ‘No’ to Violence in 2015 Elections

Intro:

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Narration: (U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria James F. Entwistle)

Hello. I'm James Entwistle and I have the privilege of serving as the Ambassador of the United States of America to your marvelous country.

As the representative of a great democracy, I share your excitement as you head towards your great democratic exercise, the February 2015 elections.

When I was a young boy in the early 1960s, I lived in the Deep South of my country, Alabama, at the height of the civil rights movement in my country. I vividly remember Dr. Martin Luther King's famous march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.

Moreover, I remember African Americans courageously demonstrating in the streets for their right to vote. I remember those demonstrators being harassed and attacked. And this is just fifty years ago in my country.

Ever since then, I have had a strong sense of just how precious the right to vote is. Around the world I have seen people make great sacrifices to exercise that right. So I encourage all Nigerians to exercise that powerful and precious right to vote.

I also carry from my youth in Alabama a deep belief that any and all violence related to the democratic process must be avoided and condemned. I've been asking politicians here if they will publicly take a pledge against violence. Perhaps the media and individual Nigerians can do the same: make clear that if a candidate wants your vote, he or she must take the pledge that they will not advocate, foment or condone violence before, during or after the election.

I know it's easy to get discouraged and think that one vote can't make a difference and that one election can't change things. But, remember that in my lifetime I've gone from seeing African Americans attacked for wanting to vote to seeing an African American president in the White

House. So, although it may not be quick or easy, genuine change through the democratic process can indeed happen.

The United States stands with you as you continue your democratic journey. Thank you very much.

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